



Watershed Protection Program

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Mosquitoes and Rain Barrels

If taken care of properly, rain barrels can provide clean, insect-free water for watering your garden. Since mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, extra care must be taken to stop mosquitoes and their larvae from entering your rain barrel system. While many rain barrels are screened to prevent adult mosquitoes from getting in, eggs and larvae can be washed in to your rain barrel from your rain gutters. Like most things around your home, your rain barrel needs a little regular attention to keep it working smoothly; here are some tips that will help you keep your rain barrel mosquito free. Please note that some of these tips may only be partially applicable as there are many different types of rain barrel systems available.

- **Downspout diverters** allow you to direct water into your rain barrel from your rain gutter. If you have a downspout diverter, closing the connection when the rain barrel is full will prevent the barrel from overflowing and creating a pool of water around your rain barrel.
- **Keep all filters clean** and free of debris.
- **Clean gutters and downspouts.** Leaves, twigs, and other organic matter can block water flow and create a standing pool of water.
- **Regularly inspect** your system for cracks or leaks and ensure that all fittings and seals around the valves are intact.
- Once a year, tip the rain barrel over and rinse it out with a hose.
- **Mosquito larvicide tablets** are time-release tablets that contain bacteria which kill mosquito larvae, but do not harm people, animals, or plants.

